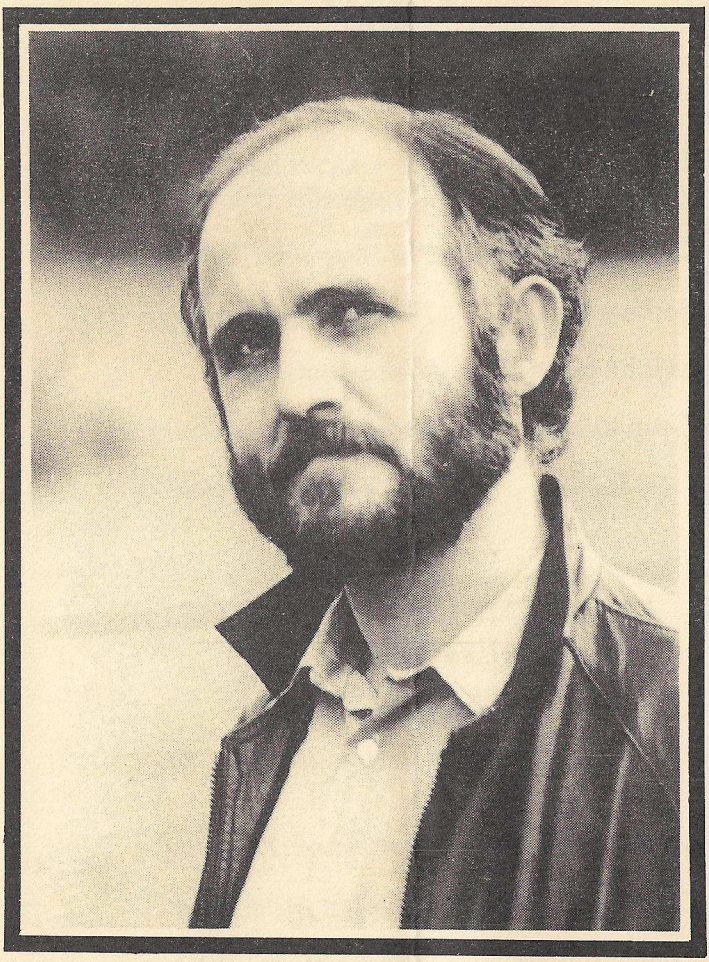
NOVACON 16

31 Oct – 2 Nov '86

De Vere Hotel, Coventry



Progress Report 2

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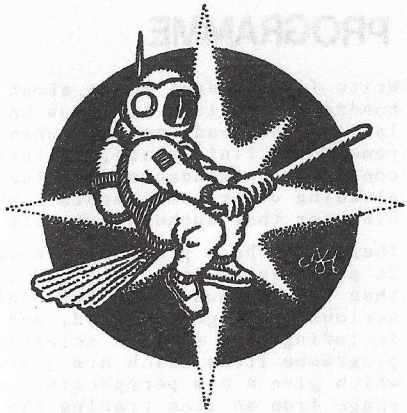


31st October - 2nd November 1986

GUEST OF HONOUR: TED TUBB

SPECIAL GUEST: CHRIS EVANS

HOTEL: The De Vere Hotel
Fairfax Street
Coventry
CV1 5RP

Telephone 0203-51851
Telex 31380

REGISTRATION:

£8.00 before the convention or £10.00 at the door. Send to Graham Poole, 86 Berwood Farm Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B72 1AG. Make cheques payable to NOVACON 16.

COMMITTEE:

Tony Berry (Chairman); Graham Poole (Treasurer); Nick Mills (Films); Roger G.Peyton (Book Room and Advertising); Maureen Porter (Programme); Darroll Pardoe and Rosemary Pardoe (Publications).

BOOKING FORM

The hotel booking form is included with this Progress Report. Please read it carefully, fill it in and return it as soon as you can. The rooms will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. The De Vere Hotel is situated in central Coventry, next to the Cathedral and opposite the main bus station. There is free parking for residents adjoining the hotel for up to 130 cars. All bedrooms have their own bathroom, radio, telephone and colour TV, and there is an in-house video channel. There are 157 twin-bedded rooms, 20 singles and 18 doubles, also 9 family rooms which consist of two twin-bedded rooms sharing one bathroom. The overflow hotel is the Leofric, 200 yards from the De Vere, and the same rates will apply at both hotels: £16.50 per night per person in a twin-bedded or double room, and £21.50 in a single. The family rooms (four people) are £66.00 per night. Rates include full English breakfast, service charge, and VAT at 15%.

Book Room and Art Show

Tables in the Book Room are 6ft x 4ft and cost £10.00 each. All dealers must, of course, be members of the convention. If you wish to have space in the Book Room, or to exhibit in the Art Show, please fill in the appropriate section of the hotel booking form. All enquiries about the Book Room or the Art Show should go to Roger G.Peyton, 19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3QL.

PROGRAMME

Write five hundred words about the programme, the man said. Five hundred words is a lot, you know, especially when you're already late on the deadline, and when the programme is still in a remarkably fluid state, letters arriving each day from people confirming attendance, or else (and worse from my point of view) pleading other commitments - why does it always come as a shock to discover that authors actually work?

There will be a programme, however, rest assured of that. In fact, it promises to be a full and varied programme, rather more intensive than in previous years but nonetheless a good balance between the serious and light-hearted, and observing the Novacon tradition of including some serious scientific items. We're looking for programme items which are just that bit out of the ordinary, or which give a new perspective on current ideas. Present ideas range from an item tracing the course of a story from the time when it leaves the author's typewriter (more likely, word processor in this technological era) to reaching printed form, to a talk on the phenomenon of spontaneous human combustion, an idea which has surfaced recently in several science fiction novels. And there are all sorts of other ideas being worked on.

There will be speeches from our Guests of Honour who will also, I hope, be taking part in other programme items during the weekend, various games and quizzes, the auction and ... well, look, if I tell you everything it will give the game away completely, and destroy the thrill of anticipation. Suffice it to say that there will probably be a surprise or two, though I'm not making any promises at the moment. What I *will* promise is that this will be the best Novacon programme so far - whatever you do, don't miss it.

(MAUREEN PORTER)

Films

We're planning an exciting and original film programme at this year's Novacon, but it's still in a state of flux and we don't want to make any announcements until it's firmed up a bit. There will be fuller details in the next Progress Report.

CHRIS EVANS

by rob holdstock

"I've been asked to write a short piece about Chris Evans," I told a woman friend of mine. She went all sort of ...soggy. Her face glowed. "He's got the sexiest voice in fandom!" she said, unprompted. "And the sexiest eyes." "Really?" I said, examining my fingernails. "I'm not so sure I agree with you..." "Oh but he has," she enthused loudly. "He's so indescribably...Welsh! He's really sexy! Isn't he, Malcolm."

It was hard not to be convinced.

I remember my first meeting with Chris Evans only too well: the stifling crush of the One Tun public house, the spilt beer, the murderous heat. We were introduced by a mutual friend. Our hands, groping towards each other for that initial greeting, squeezed between the plump bodies of Star Trek fans. At that time (1976) Chris was working for Beechams. Part of his work (as he has spoken about in public, and very amusingly) consisted of sitting with a suppository on his tongue, seeing how long it took to dissolve. One could sense, even in those days, that pharmacology was on its way out of his life (the suppositories, at any rate) and writing on its way in. I asked to see one of his science fiction short stories. He passed me a single sheet of paper with typing on it. I said that I'd prefer to read the whole thing. That is the whole thing, he said with an impish, Welsh smile.

We became close friends very quickly, and being in his company then - as indeed now - was one of the nicest and most stimulating ways to spend time. So much so that we plotted a writers' magazine called Focus (for the BSFA). For two excellent years we made the Feathers pub, in Chiswick, our editorial offices. We talked a lot of writing. We drank a lot of Fuller's ESB. We tripped over a lot of kerbstones. Chris, having made the breakthrough from stories of less than one thousand words to full length pieces, was now writing The Insider, and for the first time I became aware of just how much the man lives his work. He writes very slowly, but with exemplary standards of craft excellence and artistic integrity. The Insider is a very dark book, but it is beautifully judged. It is about an alien possession, and the ultimate satisfaction in the novel emerges as one recognises the ambivalent nature of that possession. It is a chilling experience.

The Insider was his second novel. His first, Capella's Golden Eyes, is paradoxically still the most available of his work. (The publishing world has not treated Chris kindly: a substantial portion of the paperback edition of The Insider was accidentally pulped at the time of publication and his most recent novel, In Limbo, seems to have successfully avoided the publisher's publicity department and received not a single review).

I like Capella a lot. Chris always refers to it as his 'apprentice work'. And of course it is. All first novels are apprentice works. But it is a measure of Chris the writer that Capella takes several SF cliches and injects a strong personality - a voice! - into them. Capella's ideas are familiar, but it could only have been written by Chris Evans.

His latest novel is his best. The first part of In Limbo contains a writing device which, once realised (even after finishing the book)

exquisitely transforms one's experience of the novel. Its central section is both harrowing and hilarious, including an account of the making and breaking of relationships that is shiveringly recognisable territory to most of us. A memorable novel indeed.

Like most of us, Chris is a two-career writer: his main novels and stories being one career, and a more deliberately commercial output being his family support. To this end he has written excellent texts for two illustrated books, The Guide to Fantasy Art and Lightship, which is forthcoming and which showcases the art of Jim Burns, although the text is broader. He has also dabbled in TV tie-ins (life savers!), children's fiction, fantasy and the occult, although to find out the details of these it will be necessary to approach Chris with the customary offerings of lager, free meals and free books. He will chat to you enthusiastically and with that great sense of humour of his, but it will be a very clever man who ends up one title the wiser at the end of the conversation.

I'm delighted that Chris is to be the Special Guest at Novacon. It's high time, and richly deserved. I shall be there to support him (although from the back of the room, since I wish to stay well out of range of those wretched, sexy grey eyes!).

NOVACON 15 QUESTIONNAIRE

During Novacon last year, a questionnaire was circulated so that the committee could find out your attitudes to facilities and programming at cons. 100 replies were received, about a fifth of the membership. I have summarised the replies below. Those of advanced arithmetical ability will notice that they don't add up to 100 - this is because some sections were left blank by the respondent. I would take this to mean that they don't mind one way or the other.

Tony Berry

1) Is this your first convention? Yes - 7.

2) If not, how many cons have you attended?

1-5	*6-10*	*11-15*	*16+*
22	11	11	49

3) Is this your first Novacon? Yes - 19.

4) If not, how many Novacons have you attended?

1-3	*4-6*	*7-9*	*10-12*	*13-15*
22	19	14	8	13

5) How did you first hear of Novacon?

Other cons - 10. Through a group or word-of-mouth - 54.

Adverts/posters - 8.

6) Are you a member of any SF or Fantasy group? Yes - 68. No - 20.

7) Which of the following do you consider

	Important	*Unimportant*
Games room	20	61
Video room	20	58
Fan programme	61	18

	Important	*Unimportant*
Art show	56	24
Book room	87	7
Bars	91	2
Lounge space	90	5
Reduced rate hotel rooms	92	6
Cheap food in the hotel	73	13

8) Which of the following programme items do you consider

	Important	*Unimportant*
Guest speeches	74	11
Films	63	21
Panel discussions	48	31
Quizzes	42	33
Auctions	58	21
Talks	70	17
'Official' parties	27	44
Discos	20	63
Live music	17	63

9) Are you a non-drinker? Yes - 5.

10) How often do you leave a con to eat or shop etc?

Never	*1-2*	*3-4*	*5-6*
1	30	37	9

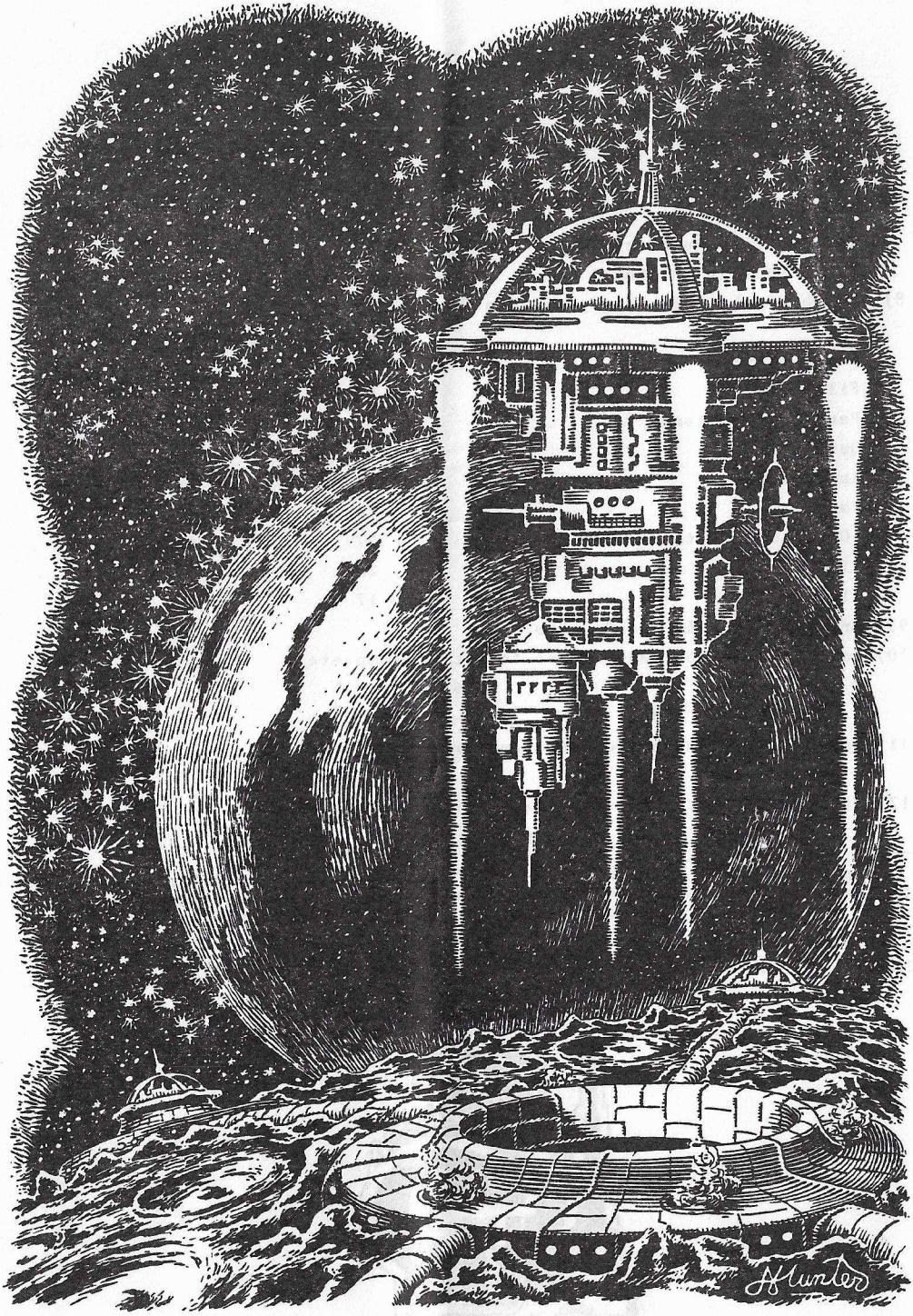
11) Do you think conventions are good value for money?

Yes - 78 No - 4.

12) Will you be attending the next Novacon?

Yes - 77 No - 4 Maybe - 15.

Also asked was 'What was your favourite con?'; a difficult question to answer. Most people said that no one stood out from the rest, but those who did have a favourite cast a lot of votes for the Albacons, Beccons and Mexicon.


A Hunter

ADVERTISING

Advertisements are welcome for inclusion in Progress Report 3 and in the Programme Book. These publications will be in A5 size.

The rates are as follows:

	FULL PAGE	*HALF PAGE*	*THIRD PAGE*	*QUARTER PAGE*
PROGRESS REPORT 3				
Professional Rate:	*£24*	*£15*	*£11*	*£9*
Non-professional Rate:	*£16*	*£10*	*£7*	*£6*
PROGRAMME BOOK				
Professional Rate:	*£30*	*£19*	*£14*	*£11*
Non-professional Rate:	*£20*	*£13*	*£10*	*£8*

Copy sizes are as follows:

Full Page	7" x 10½"
Half Page (Landscape)	7" x 5¼"
Half Page (Portrait)	3½" x 10½"
Third Page	7" x 3½"
Quarter Page	3½" x 5¼"

In all cases dimensions are given as width × height. All copy should be black on white and camera-ready. Half tones will be charged £5 extra per advertisement. Please ask for quotes for special requirements such as bleeding-off, reversals, etc.

The deadline for Progress Report 3 is 1st September 1986 and for the Programme Book is 15th September 1986.

All copy should be sent to:

Darroll & Rosemary Pardoe
38 Marina Village
Preston Brook
Runcorn
Cheshire WA7 3BQ

(Telephone 0928-716052)

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116	Phil Barnard
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122	Nicholas Walton
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124	" " " "
125	" " " "
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169	Simon Joukes
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(list complete to 5.6.86)

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